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ABSTRACT

This workshop primer is part of a set of training materials developed to help vocational rehabilitation workers improve their basic helping skills. Designed for trainees to receive two weeks prior to attending an interpersonal skills (IPS) training group, this self-instructional booklet has three purposes: to build motivation for IPS training, to teach essential concepts, and to begin skill building activities. Part 1 begins with a description of IPS training and information on how to prepare oneself. Helper response styles are then considered. An exercise helps to familiarize the trainee with the various types, and emphasis is placed on person-centered responses. Next, information and an exercise on determining another person's communication objectives are provided. Guidelines for making person-centered responses are followed by examples and discussion of counselor/client responses. An exercise to explore one's personal construct system concludes part 1. The focus of part 2 is on facilitating behavioral change. It begins with a description of the information processing model of human behavior. The process of helping is then explained by dealing with the exploration, understanding, and action phases individually. Empathic responding is the final topic discussed. (YLB)

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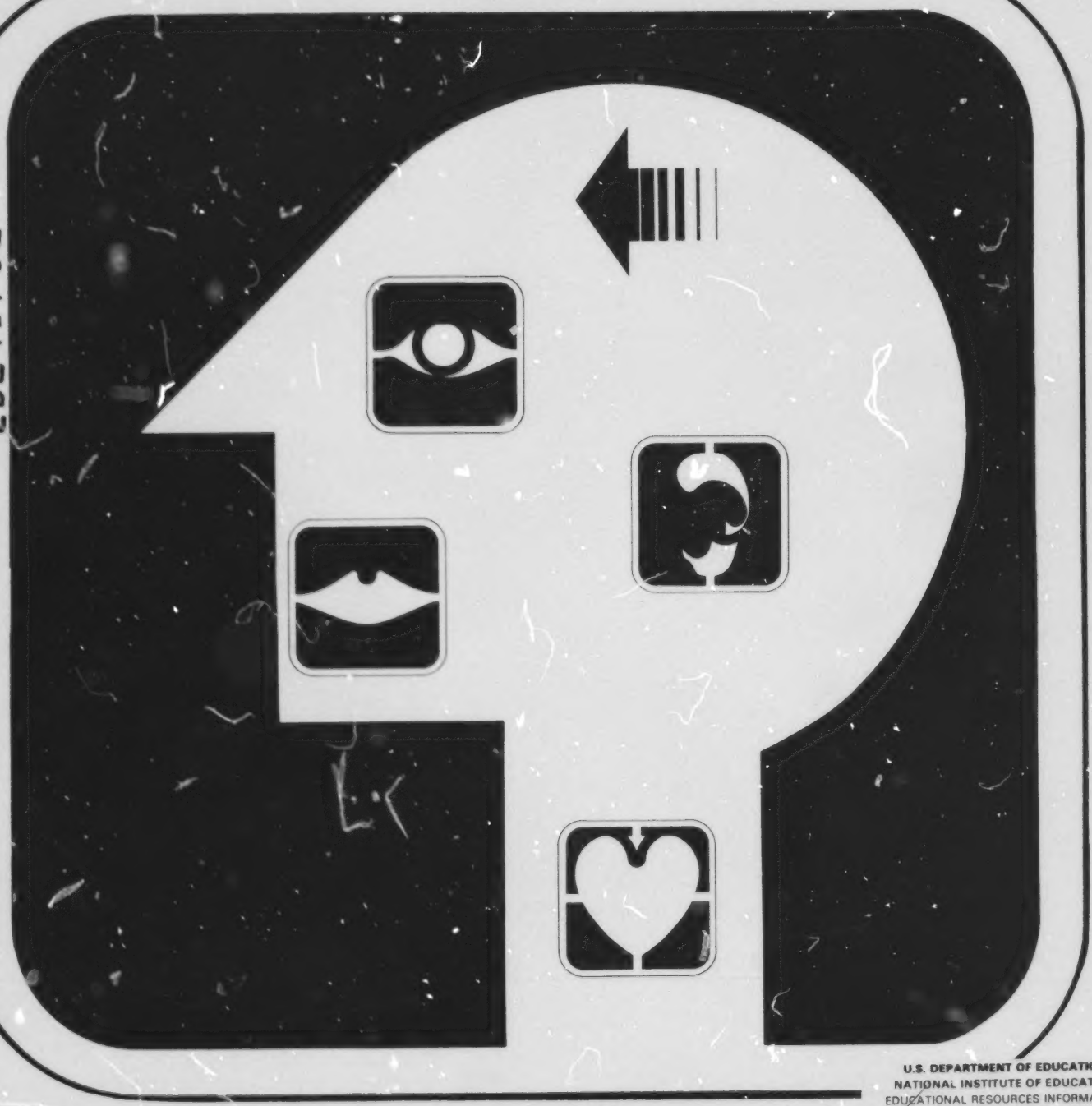

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Interpersonal Skills Training

A Workshop Primer

by

Robert L. Akridge Bob L. Means Tim Milligan Roy C. Farley

Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
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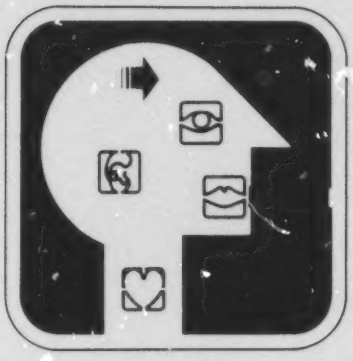

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Basic Helping Skills for Rehabilitation Workers

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May 1978

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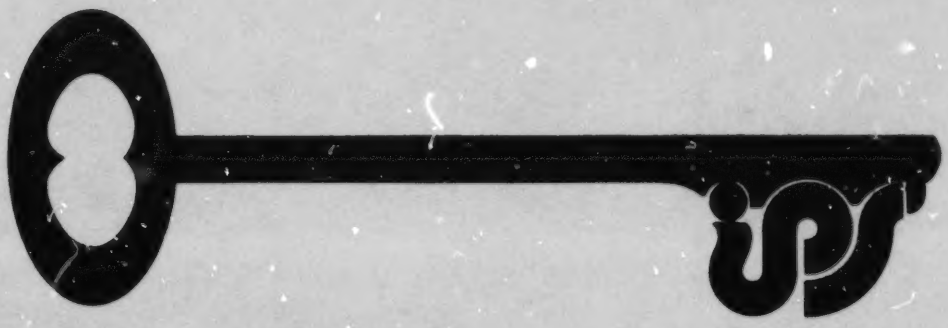
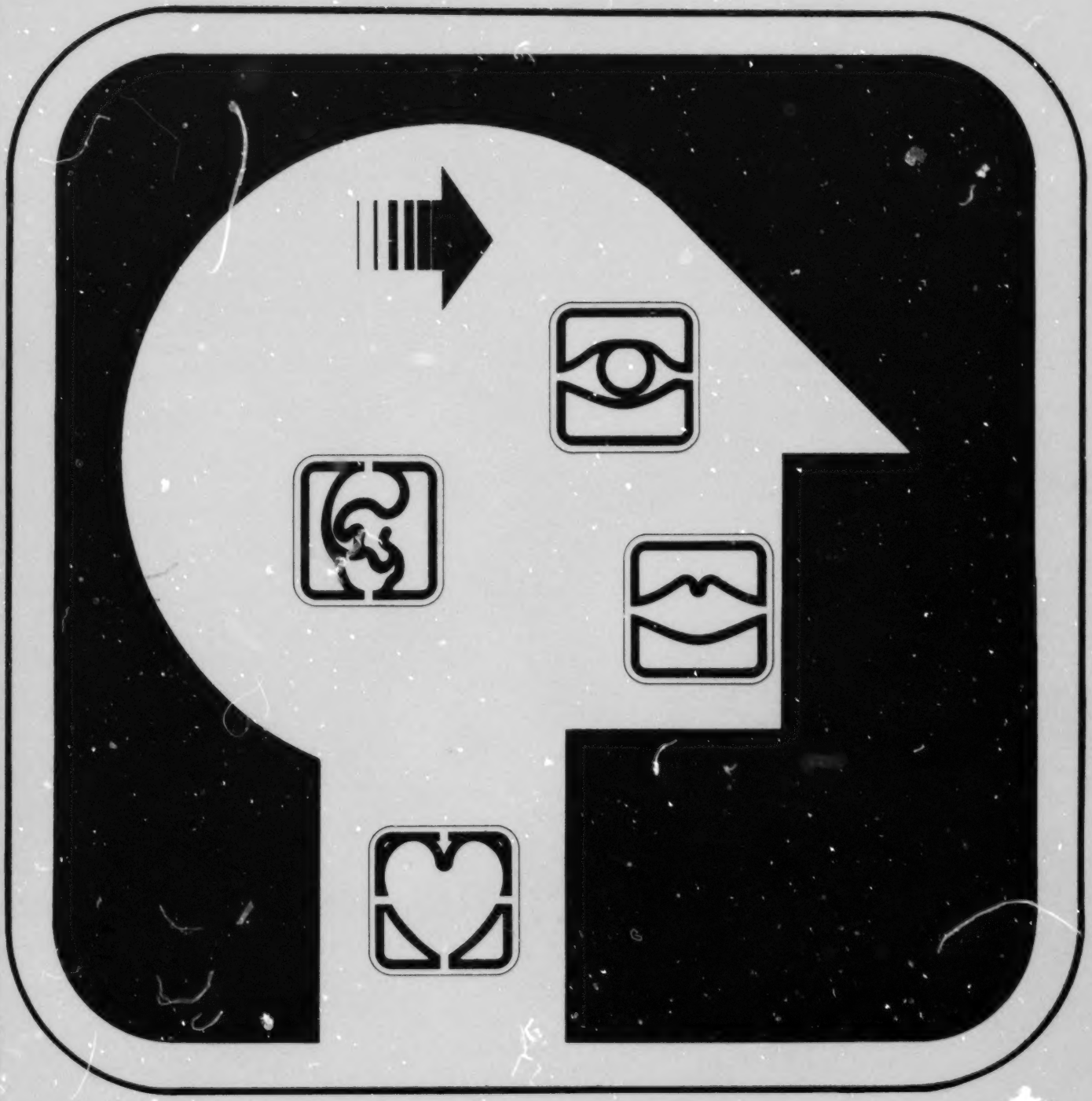
There are things I have locked up
inside me I might not say--unless
You can listen to me and not judge me
or criticize me or even praise me.





Part I

What is This IPS Training?

We're not keeping this a secret, but we don't know how to answer it in one sentence. This booklet will provide the answer for you as you work through it. Interpersonal Skills Training is concerned with improving "helping" relationships, specifically, sharpening the skills you already have to make you a more effective communicator.

When you hear the phrase "make you a more effective communicator" you feel hacked off because you don't want to be made . . .anything!

Sorry . . .We'll try again.

What is IPS Training?

(Well — The medium is the message)
It depends on which language you want it in:

LANGUAGE LEVEL ONE

IPS Training is an information process whereby one person or group of persons transmits to another group of persons a psycho-social ideology and a set of concepts and skills to operationalize the ideology.

LANGUAGE LEVEL TWO

IPS Training is a process of one person helping another so as to have a better home for both. Note: You can see from the above that it's possible to construe the same world differently at different times. Different people construe the world differently.

LANGUAGE LEVEL THREE

IPS Training is learning how to read how another person construes his world, and how to influence this process.

You can see how there are a lot of different languages.

IPS Training
is a process of helping
people become more aware.

Awareness skills undergird particular
kinds of awarenesses,
such as:

Physical Awareness,

Intrapersonal (self) Awareness,

Interpersonal Awareness,

Socio-Cultural Awareness,

Ideological Awareness.

What Will I Do to Get Ready?

Whatever IPS is (and we promise that you'll know before we're through) you'll be attending a workshop soon. You will probably ask yourself at some point— what will I do to get ready?

We recommend that you:

1. Give yourself permission to try out new and different ways of thinking, feeling, and acting since you can always go back to your old ways wherever you wish.

2. Adopt the procedural rule that, within reasonable constraints, you will get as much relevant information as possible before making decisions.

3. Learn the concepts and skills presented on the following pages. Most of the time in the IPS Training group will be devoted to skill development. There will be very little didactic instruction. The information you will need to understand and make the best use of the skill building activities is contained in this primer.

GET READY

Why Me?

Aren't my interpersonal skills O.K.? Why was this training suggested to me? What am I getting myself into? Is someone trying to tell me something, or is this a positive type of experience that everyone could profit from?

Answers to Question (Pick one or more):

The boss is depending on me to get things straightened up around the office.

The boss wants me out of the office for a few days.

I deserve it, I do a super job and deserve a vacation.

I need it, I haven't gotten a closure in three months.

Because I get along with everyone in the office.

Because I don't get along with anyone in the office.

So I can worry about what's going on in the office.

So I can stop worrying about what's going on in the office.

Because sometimes I feel that a counselor's job is too much for one person.

Because I think there's nothing to this counseling business as long as you remember that paper work takes priority and pay day is on Friday.

Who Else is Going to Be There?

Your IPS Training group includes a small group of your peers and a qualified trainer. Everything you are asked to do is first demonstrated by the trainer. The other group members are people like yourself who — for a given amount of effort — wish to deliver the best possible service.

It has consistently been our experience that participants enjoy this training. Many of the friendships which develop in these training groups are deep and long lasting.

A "Growing" Problem

The problem that most counselors — well, the main problem we have (and a lot of other counselors have told us that they have the same problem) is:

Developing counseling skills involves changing our typical performance in a given skill area, such as listening. Whereas our other experiences with training mostly involved trying to change our maximum performance in a given skills area, such as reading.

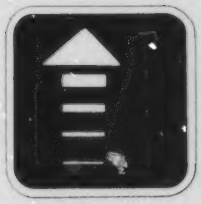
When we engage in training which changes our typical behavior, we are cooperating in changing ourselves. We have found this to be threatening sometimes, but an effective means for growing in ways we wish to grow.

There is no way to dress up what appears to be the case that. . .

None of us can be any more effective as a counselor than we are as a person.

The biggest problem is accepting that developing counseling skills requires growing as a person.

However, We've Developed A Method Which is Relatively Painless . . .



IF YOU:

(a) Will read this primer,

(b) Actively participate in the IPS workshop, and

(c) Carry out the follow-up exercises,

YOU WILL LEARN:

(a) What to look and listen for

(b) What to respond to

(c) How to help people open up

(d) How to avoid turning people off

(e) How to avoid fights and arguments

(f) How to get more in touch with your own experiencing

(g) How to help clients become noticeably more self-directing, self-supporting, and emotionally mature persons.

Program Assumptions

We're assuming that:

1. You're concerned with increasing your effectiveness as a helper. You probably don't go around chasing rainbows, but if someone can demonstrate a "better way", you'll try it.

2. Effectiveness in being a helper is a collection of skills, attitudes, and information that can be learned.

3. Everyone has some degree of effectiveness in helping others, effectiveness exists in degrees, (we're interested in increasing the skills you already have).

4. The field of interpersonal relations is broad — but certain kinds of things are critical — the most critical have been identified (you'll be learning these).

5. Certain core or basic interpersonal skills are critical in any interpersonal relationship. They are especially critical in helping relationships because the absence of these skills causes harm to clients just as their presence is helpful to clients.

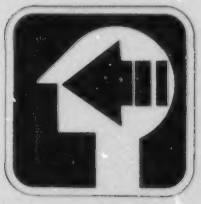
6. The application of specific interpersonal skills to a counseling situation is what you are most interested in. Therefore most of the examples here are a situation where one person is confronting a crisis and another person is trying to help.

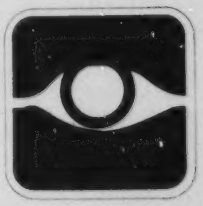
7. Many of the really crucial things you do as a counselor are things that people do just as a part of being a person. The difference is that effective counselors do these crucial things more effectively.

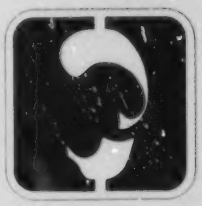
8. One skill that effective counselors have in common with other effective persons is being able to consistently communicate to a person (a) that you understand and accept him, and (b) specifically what you understand the person to be thinking and feeling.

9. The skills you learn will be useful in other areas of life such as:
   a. Initiating and maintaining satisfying relationships.
   b. Having a positive (growth provoking) influence on others — including your children.

How Do You Typically Respond to the Person You're Helping?





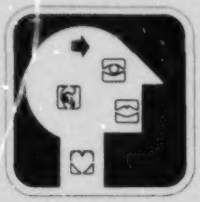


You're beginning to see that our attitudes are strongly favorable to IPS Training.

IPS Training will help you more frequently say the right things in the right way to be helpful to people.

Believe it or not this is relatively uncommon. Most people tend to respond basically in the same way to people regardless of what the person needs or is asking for. We refer to these as "interpersonal styles". Look over the list below and see which one of these styles you are especially prone to use.

1. Quickly give the "correct" answer or solution to a problem or situation — stifle discussion.
2. Keep asking questions or reflecting and never give any information.
3. Just listen passively – don't know what to say so just don't.
4. Continually give the other person support (Charlie Brown's ideal wife — "it's going to be O.K., honey").
5. Have it much worse than anyone else or know someone who does. (You've either got it, are getting it, know someone who's got it, or about to die with it.)
6. Change the subject when things get personal.
7. Do all the talking.
8. Come on as a curiousity seeker.
9. Answer all ills with religion.

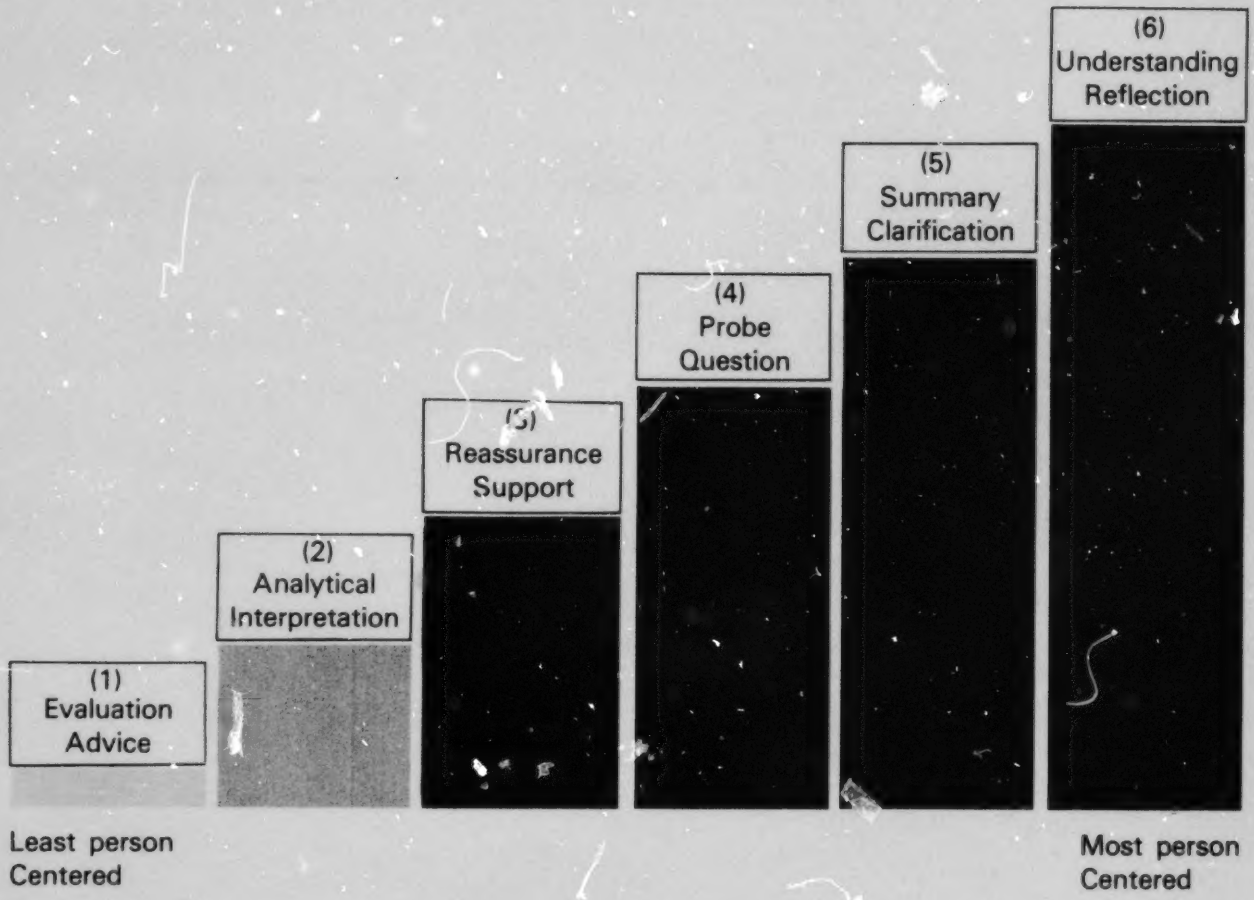


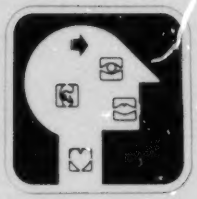
Helper Response Styles

Research shows that helpers tend to favor one of six general styles of responding. The chart on page 13 displays these six helper styles. Working through the helper response discrimination exercise will help you understand each type. As you work through the exercise determine which type of helper response you most frequently make.

Types of Helper Responses

FIGURE 1





Description of Response Types

1. **EVALUATION, ADVICE**: Response suggests approval or disapproval and/or tells the person what to do.
2. **ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION**: Explains or rationalizes why the helpee did or did not do something.
3. **REASSURANCE, SUPPORT**: Diverts the helpee's attention from whatever is bothering him or her.
4. **PROBE, QUESTION**: Interrogation to "uncover the facts" about the helpee.
5. **SUMMARY, CLARIFICATION**: Summarizes and paraphrases the content of what the helpee has said.
6. **UNDERSTANDING, REFLECTION**: Communicates, in a helpful manner, the helper's understanding of the feeling and meaning of the helpee's experience.

Helper Response Discrimination Exercise

For each of the helper responses below, place a number 1 through 6 on the blank provided to indicate the type of response. (Check your answers on page 18.) In each of the three situations, assume a helping relationship with a person who says:

1. I always try to do my work well. I like for things to be right, but it seems like in this course I just can't do anything right. I studied harder for this test than for the last one, but I got a lower grade.

_____ (a) You probably got pretty tense because of your strong need for approval so that the anxiety actually got in your way.

_____ (b) How much did you actually study, and what study methods did you use?

_____ (c) It's very important to you to do a good job and you usually do O.K., but in this instance studying just doesn't seem to help any.

_____ (d) Assuming that you spend as much time studying as you imply — then you should approach the task differently. Why don't you try outlining the chapters.

_____ (e) You feel really disappointed and frustrated because your performance makes you seem inadequate as a person . . . and you're wondering if the problem is in you or in the course.

_____ (f) A lot of students have difficulty with this, but if you just keep working at it, things will begin to fall into place and you'll do O.K.

2. I just can't get with it. When I came into this class I made up my mind to really change my image—to really be a part of the group and get involved in the work, but whenever I say something it sounds stupid and everybody just ignores me. I used to hang around after class thinking someone would talk to me, but they don't. Why are people so unfriendly to me?

_____ (a) I don't think your comments sound stupid. As you gain more confidence and speak up more, I'm sure the other students will appreciate what you have to say.

_____ (b) You should have more confidence in yourself. One way to do this is to be better prepared. Write down a couple of relevant comments before class so you can put them in at the appropriate time.

_____ (c) What happened to make you want to change your image?

_____ (d) You apparently have an inferiority complex which was probably caused by your parents and earlier teachers not encouraging you to speak up about what you thought or felt.

_____ (e) You feel resentful because no one will pay attention to you and at the same time you're trying to figure out whether you are doing something that causes people to ignore you.

_____ (f) You want to participate in class and make friends with the other students, but as you see it, you aren't making any progress.

3. I got your letter saying that you could probably help me go to college, but Daddy says we're not going to take any charity. Yet, he won't pay my way. I tried to get him to at least talk to you when you came today, but he was real ugly.

_____ (a) Well, don't you worry, dear, when I talk to your father I'm sure he'll come around.

_____ (b) What does your mother think of the idea?

_____ (c) You just tell your old man that his taxes pay for our services whether he uses them or not.

_____ (d) It sounds like your father has a very weak ego. It would threaten his authority if you got help from any one other than him.

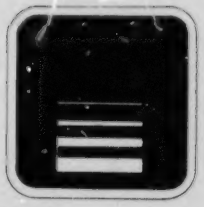
_____ (e) You want to go to college. It's possible that Rehabilitation Services could help you, but right now your father seems to be blocking that possibility.

_____ (f) You must feel really disappointed wanting so much to go to college — yet, seeing your father block the only avenue that you see open to you.

Answers to Discrimination Exercise

1.	2.	3.
a - 2	a - 3	a - 3
b - 4	b - 1	b - 4
c - 5	c - 4	c - 1
d - 1	d - 2	d - 2
e - 6	e - 6	e - 5
f - 3	f - 5	f - 6

Essential Elements of Person-Centered Responses

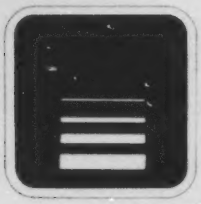


You discovered from the last exercise that the most *person-centered* helper responses refer to *both* the *feelings* and the *meanings* of the helpee.

Room to Grow

Understanding each type of counselor response puts you in a better position to look at your own typical response pattern in terms of how "person-centered" your responses are. We can change our concept of what it means to be effective in counseling a lot easier and faster than we can change our actual counseling behavior. It is for this reason that attempts to improve our counseling skills can be threatening. We sometimes avoid thinking through a particular operation if doing so would result in seeing (thinking of) a way which is better than we presently are doing.

It seems important to us that as helpers we have frequent opportunities to examine what we do — as helpers and as persons. We insist, and we hope that you insist, on a context for doing this self-exploration which is non-judgemental and non-evaluative. It is just as detrimental for you to hold a club over your own head and demand change as it is to do so with a client. Continuing to accept, respect, and be kind to the person and helper you presently are, is the best assurance of future growth.



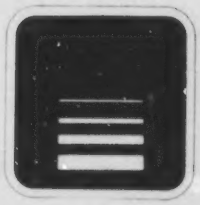
Why Make Person-Centered Responses

In the early stages of helping your main objective is to help the person explore himself in relation to his or her environment. Research clearly shows that making person-centered responses to the client helps the client get into his experiences and explore self-in-situation.

Helping the person label feelings and integrate these feelings with thinking and acting accomplishes a number of important objectives:

1. A person can not cope adaptively with experiences for which he has no label. Helping the person label his feelings allows him to complete the experience and to stop "blocking".
2. When feelings are consistently blocked, the person's thinking becomes confused. Freeing up a person's processing of feelings allows other information processing, such as thinking, to proceed more effectively.
3. Accepting the person's feelings communicates acceptance of the person.
4. Labeling the person's feelings in a context of being accepted allows the person to accept himself and to "own" (stop projecting) his feelings and thoughts.

When to Make Person-Centered Responses



You must choose to make person-centered responses. The fact that you have a choice implies a need for criteria for determining when to make person-centered responses. Make person-centered responses whenever:

You wish to engage and understand a person better.
You wish to initiate, build, or improve a helping relationship.
You wish to help another person explore and understand himself/herself better (comprehend and personalize his or her experience
You wish to help a person act on his or her understanding.

Determining the Other Person's Communication Objective

Every human communication has a *cognitive content* and an *affective intent.* For some messages the cognitive content is of primary importance while for other messages the affective intent is of primary importance. The first step in making empathic responses, or being person-centered, is to determine the person's communication objective. This requires discriminating between affective intent and cognitive content.

Examples:

A 1. Wife (who is busy preparing lunch) to husband (who is talking to a visitor) "Would you see after the children, please, while I'm busy here."

B 1. Male motorist to friendly looking male at bus stop "Excuse me, sir —could you tell me how to get to Main Street?"

Note: Both examples have both a cognitive content and an affective intent, but in example A-1 the affective intent is relatively more important whereas in B-1 the cognitive content is more important. In order to avoid disrupted interpersonal relations, it is necessary to discriminate between the two kinds of communications and respond to the appropriate one. Where there is a question of whether cognitive content or affective intent is being emphasized, you only have to listen to what follows in order to pick up the pattern. In the example above, the next exchanges were:

A 2. Husband--"O.K.". (and continues talking to visitor)
Wife--"Would you get the children ready for lunch, now! I can't do everything!"

B 2. Man at bus stop--"Go three blocks north, turn right on Elm which intersects Main at the second traffic light."
Motorist--"Thank you very much."

Note: The essential message which the wife was transmitting and which the husband failed to respond to was something like: "I resent being left out of the conversation and given all the work." In this example the affective intent was much more important to the wife than the cognitive content.

The primary focus of this training is on how to make verbal responses to show that you understand what another person is experiencing. When you are functioning as a helper it is important to make verbal responses because this teaches the helpee how to label his own feelings. In many instances, however, you may communicate your understanding (empathy) through what you do. In this example the husband could communicate empathic understanding by responding to his wife as a person which would bring her into the group.

The communication of the motorist also has an affective component, but there was nothing in the situation to cause it to become important to either person. The motorist, through the act of asking the question was communicating something like: "I feel comfortable with my assumption that you are a rational and friendly person who will respond to me in an acceptable manner." But, having this part of the message received and responded to was not central to the communication objective of the motorist.

For each of the following messages, indicate whether you consider the communication objective to be more concerned with (A) Cognitive Content, or (B) Affective Intent.

_____ 1. Daughter to Mother: "We're going on a field trip to the power plant tomorrow so I won't be home until 5:00."

_____ 2. Daughter to Mother: "Why did you get me a brown dress? You know I hate brown!"

_____ 3. Student to Teacher:"I just hate that Principal! He struts around like a rooster and thinks he's so cool. But you know, he really doesn't care about us."

_____ 4. Six year old son to divorced Mother: "I don't want you to go out with that man. He's bad. You're gone all the time."

_____ 5. Client to Counselor: "I went shopping on the way here. Found a real pretty dress at Macy's. Do you ever ride the city buses much?"

_____ 6. Client to Counselor: "Can you tell me how to find a rest room?"

_____ 7. Client to Counselor: "I divorced my husband several years ago and now that our children are out of college and on their own, I would like to find some interesting kind of work."

_____ 8. Wife to Husband: "Are you going fishing again tonight? How many times a month do you think you have to go in order to be satisfied?"

_____ 9. Husband to Wife: "This place is a mess! Did you look at the telephone bill for last month? Incidentally, your Mother called while you were out."

_____ 10. Twelve year old son to Father: "Why can't I ride my mini-bike to John's house? I can ride in the ditch. You never let me do anything! This is the most boring place I've ever seen!"

Be sure to write an (A) for cognitive content or (B) for affective intent on each blank before checking the correct answers on the next page.

ANSWERS:

1 - A
2 - B
3 - B
4 - B
5 - B
6 - A
7 - A
8 - B
9 - B
10 - B

Effective Counseling: A Client's View*

EMPATHY:

the ability to feel as if you were me . . .a willingness to descend into the depths, to feel my terror, and to share the ugliness inside me. Empathy is the courage to be open to me, even at the risk of being changed yourself through our encounter. Empathic response demands courage and fortitude. You could escape the trauma of our encounter by imposing advice or cheerful mindless assurance upon me. But even though there must be times when you want to retreat, you hang in there with me, and that does more for me than any counseling "techniques" or inspiring philosophy. If you are willing to endure this hell with me, then perhaps there is hope.

RESPECT:

which you actualize by refusing to accept me at less than I can be, while recognizing my right to grow at my own pace and be me. When I blow it, you do not demean me with parental consolation, well-meant advice, or suffocating over protection. With respectful silence you enter into and accept my feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment. You show respect by being honest with me. When my perceptiveness strikes a vulnerable point within you, you do not retaliate by putting me down or by refusing to express your own feelings. Instead you say, "Ouch! You're right! Although I'm uncomfortable, I appreciate you."

GENUINENESS:

you show me, through your personal example, that I don't have to wait until I am stronger or more perfect to start living, for you share not only your warmth and intensity but your own pain. Because you appear to be so strong and wise, it would be easy for me to isolate you on a pedestal and make your example an unattainable ideal. You put yourself within reach when you share your own struggle without bogging me down. If you can be who you are while you struggle and suffer, then I, too, can transcend my own despair.

* This excerpt was taken from "Effective Counseling: A Client's View" by Cindy Lee Webster, The Personnel and Guidance Journal, Volume 52, No. 5, January, 1974.

How to Make Person-Centered Responses (Some Guidelines)

Making effective person-centered responses requires certain helper characteristics and skills. In order to consistently make the kind of person-centered responses we're talking about, the helper must be in touch with and accept his own feelings. Carl Rogers maintains, and is clearly supported by research, that the most important characteristic of a helpful counselor is genuineness (the ability and the behavioral tendency to be empathic towards oneself).

GENUINENESS

Genuineness means being real—letting be what actually is. It means not interfering with your natural responsiveness to what is there. Genuineness includes being emotionally honest. When people block or distort their feelings, they cannot be genuine. Genuineness is characterized by a lack of facade—the person doesn't hide behind a role such as "therapist" or "nice guy" or "comedian".

A genuine person is comfortable expressing either strong positive or negative feelings toward another when such feelings are real and relevant to maintaining his intergrity or expressing his delight. The genuine person is open and revealing because he does not over-employ judgements of "good" and "bad" about himself.

From revealing to people around you who you really are comes the development in self of a strong feeling and appreciation for who you are. It is through this caring for and valuing of your own uniqueness that you develop the capacity for respecting and valuing this uniqueness in others.

In summary, Genuineness means being aware of and owning your feelings, thinking, and acting—so that in any given situation your behavior is the fullest possible expression of your feeling and thinking.

GUIDELINES

RESPECT

Being genuine in our "game playing" world is not easy. Being genuine sometimes places you in a position of having to defend such propositions as:

(a) My strong feelings are a real, positive, and desirable aspect of human experience. Along with my ability to reason, they provide an adaptive guide to action.

(b) Only I can feel my feelings, think my thoughts and act my actions. This point of view cannot be defended for one's self without applying it to others.

WHEN WE DEMAND THE RIGHT TO ACT ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING, WE ARE MORE LIKELY TO ALLOW OTHERS TO DO THE SAME.

The absence of respect frequently involves projecting undesirable aspects of oneself onto others.

Example:

A person with strong dependency feelings of which he is unaware (which he disowns) is more likely to see other people as inadequate, needing someone to look after them.

If we simply stop putting our "Bad" onto other people, we are likely to see a lot of "Good" in them. THIS IS RESPECT.

The way to stop putting your "Bad" onto clients is to develop ways of staying out of the Evaluation Trap.

The Evaluation Trap

FIGURE 2

All of our experiences are sifted through our particular perceptual net. If you ever ask the question as to which of these "Good"-"Bad" categories to put a person in—then you're already in the trap—no matter how generous you are in your evaluation.

If you're like most people who grew up in our culture, you tend to pigeon-hole people into value-laden slots. It's a natural enough thing to do because just about everyone does it, usually without even being aware of doing so. But to place people along these Good/Bad dimensions puts counselors in a double blind situation which frequently renders them impotent as helpers.

As a rehabilitation worker, your job depends upon your ability to be an advocate for and to some degree identify with a group that, according to our culture, are "misfits". If you see people along such Good/Bad dimensions, then you have a vested interest in seeing clients as "good", or at least "better" than they really are (i.e., more like your perception of the cultural norm than they really are). This is distorting information. Often they begin to disappoint you and don't live up to your expectations.

In actuality, the clients continue to behave as they have always behaved. After you "do your best" (try to convince the client and yourself that he's really different from what he is) you finally give up and conclude that he is bad and doesn't want help or he gets fed up with being expected to be something he is not and gives up on you. The only way out of this trap is to find a different way of looking at and listening to people. As long as an evaluative dimension is applied to clients it will be most difficult for you to see or hear them with any degree of clarity because you will be protecting yourself from knowing how "bad", "weak", or "ugly" they are.

WE ARE NOT SAYING TO STOP RESPONDING! We are saying to you, "STOP RESPONDING IN AN EVALUATIVE MODE." If you can stop evaluating and continue to attend to the client with intensity, you will be able to see and hear what the client is doing and how he is doing it, and will be able to describe this process to the client. This will provide valuable feedback to the client and will eventually allow him to effectively process information without your help.

Many persons who are presently working in rehabilitation will not be able to significantly increase their effectiveness until they change from an evaluative mode to a descriptive mode of responding. A way to do this is to keep all of your attention focused on what the client is doing, how he is doing it, what he is saying, and how he is saying it. This is a good working definition of showing Respect for the person being helped.

Sometimes as a helper you simply transmit information which you have to a person who needs that information or collect information from the person, but the major focus as a helper is on how a person processes information. This, together with providing feedback, helps the person improve the quantity and quality of his information processing. Applied to

the realm of human values, this means that the helper is relatively unconcerned about the content of the client's values, but is very concerned about the process of the client's value clarification. This also shows respect and requires a lot of genuineness and empathy on your part.

In brief, respect means attending and responding in a descriptive mode rather than an evaluative mode.

EMPATHY

As the song says, "What you see is what you get." When we have trouble understanding people — the difficulty is often in the eye of the beholder.

Empathy is the ability to attend another person and to be aware of what that person is experiencing. In order to do this, you must be aware of what you are experiencing. Empathic responding is communicating to a person your understanding of what that person is experiencing (feeling and meaning) in a manner he or she can comprehend and accept.

Coming to accept and value your own uniqueness (genuineness) and the uniqueness of others (respect) enables you to look at another person and actually see that person. You can listen to the person and actually hear the person rather than the noise in your own head.

The main point here is that people are easy to understand — once you understand and accept yourself. You, I, and everyone are engaged in the same task of continuously working out a meaningful and enlivening adaptation to our world. The kinds of basic needs we try to satisfy in the process of doing this are very similar from person to person. This fact, coupled with the fact that persons are pretty much the same on the inside as they are on the outside, is why we say people are easy to understand. The understanding we gain may not be easy for us to accept or act upon, but this "problem" is in us or between us and the person being understood — not in the person.

In summary, being empathic means attending to the person and communicating your understanding of what the person is feeling, thinking, and doing.

Relationship Among Genuineness, Respect, and Empathy

Understanding the relationship among Genuineness, Respect, and Empathy is a critical factor in understanding this approach to Interpersonal Skills Training.

1. **GENUINENESS** is understanding, accepting, celebrating and being yourself.

2. **RESPECT** is understanding, accepting, and letting another be.

3. **EMPATHY** is understanding, accepting, prizing, and being with another.

What the Training Will Be Like

The dimensions of empathy, respect and genuineness have been found to be closely related and inter-dependent. This implies that increasing one will, over time, tend to increase the others. The question that occurs in training helpers is which one or ones of these dimensions should be focused upon.

Encounter and sensitivity training groups typically focus directly on increasing a person's genuineness. Encounter and sensitivity training groups may be very helpful to persons in the helping professions, but that will not be the focus of this training.

This approach to IPS Training focuses primarily on empathy training. Empathy training is easier to teach, easier to learn, better researched, and more explicitly described in the professional literature than other approaches to IPS Training.

Some of the specific things you'll be doing in empathy training are:

1. Learning to recognize and label feelings in another person.
2. Learning to respond empathetically to people in a way to consistently increase their level of genuineness.
3. Assuming the role of helpee part of the time.
4. Getting more in contact with your feelings and relating these feelings to your assumptions about yourself and the world.
5. Examining some of the assumptions you have about the place of feelings in human experience.
6. Learning to recognize other people's feelings, assumptions, personal constructs, and body language cues, and at the same time, learning how to apply these observational skills to yourself.
7. Learning to respond to a person so as to engage him or her in self-exploration and to influence that person to increase the intensity and depth of self-exploration.

How to Make Person-Centered Responses (What to Do)

As a Helper in a counseling role with a person, you have some particular things you wish to have happen (objectives). In the early stages of counseling, your major objective is to engage the helpee in self-exploration. As the helpee explores himself in relation to his environment, he increases his awareness and hence his self-maintaining and self-enhancing behaviors.

Most people have mixed feelings about receiving help and about changing their behavior. Some of the ways clients try to avoid meaningful self-exploration and some effective ways for engaging clients are listed and illustrated below. The pattern of Helper-Helpee interaction tends to become established during the first few minutes of encounter. Thus it is crucial to use effective helping strategies from the first moment of contact.

WHAT THE HELPEE DOES	WHAT THE HELPER DOES
When the Helper really focuses on the Helpee, the Helpee's excitation level (anxiety) goes up. The anxiety is reduced by either:	Makes contact and maintains intensity of encounter through attending responses
1. Engaging in self-exploration (focus on self)	1. Looking at
2. Making random responses in an effort to structure time (focus on various aspects of environment)	2. Listening to
3. Withdrawing physically or emotionally.	3. Feeling with
	4. Thinking with
	5. Responding to

WHAT TO DO

Counselor/Client Responses

HELPEE	HELPER
If the helpee engages in personally relevant self-exploration, then. . .	The helper labels the helpee's feelings and relates the feeling to the helpee's perception of environmental stimuli which elicited them (responds with accurate empathy).
If the helpee avoids personally relevant self-exploration through projection, then. . .	The helper personalizes the experience by tentatively labeling the feeling which the helpee projected onto the environment.
If the helpee focuses on past experiences to rationalize present behavior, then...	The helper uses present tense feeling words and expressions such as "even now you feel...." or "still you feel...." (immediacy of responding).

EXAMPLES

Helpee: "After the third Doctor, I'm beginning to believe that there is no physical basis for the pain--but I'll be damned if I know what to do with that information."
Helper: "This is a distressing idea because you're left with little hope of getting help from the Doctors and no hint of how to help yourself."

Helpee: "She's afraid I'll get sick and be put back in the hospital."
Helper; "And you also feel apprehensive about whether you'll continue to grow into the kind of person who can cope and enjoy life."

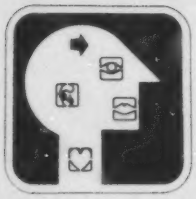
Helpee:"I wanted the opportunity to achie[illegible]; I think. And that never seemed to come. And that was because of me, I suppose."
Helper: "You feel very discouraged because you don't see yourself accomplishing anything worthwhile.
Helpee: "I always wanted to be able to do a lot of things, and I never could."
Helper: "You want to do something that you can be proud of and that someone will admire you for, yet right now, you feel worthless.

DISCUSSION

Having another person communicate understanding is pleasant. The helper, by responding empathically, "rewards" the helpee's efforts at self-exploration in addition to facilitating the process.

By focusing on the helpee's affect, the helper insures that topics dealt with are something over which he can exert some influence in changing. The helper cannot help third persons not present.

The focus is on "here and now" experiencing as opposed to "there and then".



Counselor/Client Responses

HELPEE	HELPER
If the helpee avoids "unacceptable" feelings and attitudes by exaggerating their opposite and being intolerant of others who convey such feelings, then...	The helper responds empathically to the helpee's surface feelings and confronts the helpee's denied feelings and attitudes.
If the helpee tends to use abstractions and over-compacted generalizations, then. . .	The helper focuses on immediate organismic feelings and specific needs, goals, events, and relationships (concrete and specific).
If the helpee uses impersonal pronouns to avoid feelings by externalizing the experience, then. . .	The helper makes labeling responses in first person, present tense (immediacy of responding).

EXAMPLES

Helpee: "Innocent or not, she wears her hair piled on the top of her head, and so much make-up, I mean she really looks like a woman of the world, and—the first time you talk to her, you know she's not."

Helper: "You feel resentful towards your friend because it bugs you for a girl to show off her sexual interest. It seems to me that you're trying to decide what is okay for you, sexually – and you still have a lot of mixed feelings about it."

Helpee: "Well, the main thing is to have the satisfaction of having done your best—I value a sense of satisfaction in having done my best. I value that above my personal happiness."

Helper: "It really hurts when you feel like a failure. There is some particular thing you want to do and you are uncertain whether or not you'll be able to do it."

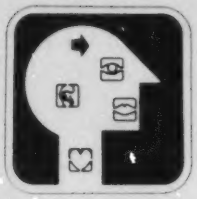
Helpee: "If and when I could get the same drives, contrive satisfaction that you see a lot of people getting from their work. It just permeates your life, not just your working life, but all of your personal life as well."

Helper: "I feel so confused—I keep thinking that if I peer closely enough into other people I'll get in touch with something in myself that will make living feel good to me—but it doesn't."

DISCUSSION

Confrontations should always be preceeded by generous amounts of accurate empathy. Responding only to denied feelings and attitudes may serve to put the helpee on the defensive.

The helper assumes the role of the helpee's alter ego and restates the experience in an internalized manner.



Counselor/Client Responses

HELPEE	HELPER
If the helpee psychologically withdraws from the encounter to avoid contacting the experience, then . . .	The helper labels the feeling which the helpee seems to be trying to avoid.
If the helpee focuses on "Ideal Self" as a way of avoiding contact with real self, then . . .	The helper focuses on organismic experiencing and confronts real – ideal discrepancies (confrontation).
If the helpee engages in intellectual monologue about self as though he or she were an object, then . . .	Helper makes labeling responses in first person, present tense focusing on immediate feelings.

EXAMPLES

Helper: "You're almost ready to leave the hospital. I'm thinking that you could get more prepared by exploring your plans."

Helpee: "There ain't nothing to say."

Helper: "The thought of getting out of the hospital and starting over is very frightening to you because so much seems to be riding on how you handle this."

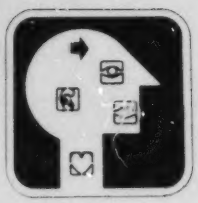
Helpee: "A person ought not to have a family if they can't take care of them. I should have put some money aside while I was working . . . and I would have except that every-thing kept tearing up. I guess something will come up . . . ."

Helper: "When you start comparing yourself as a man and as a provider with what you think you should be, you get very depressed. So depressed in fact that you're tempted to put off ever considering the difference between where you are and where you want to be."

Helpee: "I think what contributes to most people today being a nervous wreck and having heart trouble is mainly their nerves. That's why I thought I'd get up north, but you cannot get away from it no matter where you are."

Helper: "I know I'm making my heart problem worse but I feel so helpless to do anything about it. I keep trying to get away from this desperate feeling of anxiety, but every-where I go, I keep taking it with me."

DISCUSSION



Counselor/Client Responses

HELPEE	HELPER
If the helpee attempts to manipulate the helper by dependency, then . . .	The helper responds both to the helpee's affect and to the dependency.
If the helpee attempts to manipulate the helper into an argument by attacking the helper, then . . .	The helper again responds to the helpee's affect.

EXAMPLES

Helpee: "What do you think is wrong with me? What should I do so I can stop feeling this way?"

Helper: "It frightens you to have feelings that you consider wrong. You would like for me to tell you what to do, but I don't have a pat answer.

Helpee: "You sit there so damn cool while I pour my guts out. You don't even get upset when I deliberately try to shock you. Doesn't anything get you upset?"

Helper: "It's pretty distressing for you to think that you might not have any impact on me as a person— it makes our relationship seem unreal."

DISCUSSION

There is no magic formula the helper can give another, other than facilitating the helpee's effort toward problem resolution.

Qualitative Aspects of Empathy

Making person-centered responses of the sort illustrated in the last section are operations which express empathy. The way the helper makes such responses is just as important, however, as what is said. This section discusses some of the qualitative aspects of empathy.

It is important to keep in mind that the helper's purpose for responding is to cause the helpee to better feel his feelings, think his thoughts, and act his actions. For the most part, self-awareness is the result of an interactive process between the person and another.

(a) **EXPRESSIVENESS**—An expressive manner of communicating empathy is characterized by spontaneity, creativity, directness, and earthiness; and avoids sounding formal, mechanical, pedantic, or stilted. In general, it is facilitative for the helper to use language which is as expressive and earthy as he can conforably use as long as he stays within the helpee's language system. The effective helper will avoid using language which would be offensive to the helpee.

The following two helper responses differ considerably on the dimension of expressiveness.

> **Helpee**: "I don't think anyone likes me. My teachers in school didn't like me, the boss at my last job didn't like me and I'm not even sure you like me."
>
> **LESS EXPRESSIVE**
> Helper: "You feel hurt because the people whom you want to respect you, including me, act as though they don't like you."
>
> **MORE EXPRESSIVE**
> Helper: "I sure as hell like the way you're letting me know right now, where you are, and I can see that you're hurting. Sometimes you act to me like you don't think your shit stinks and sometimes you act like you think you're nothing but a piece of shit. I see us both as being somewhere between those two extremes. Maybe we can zero in on what it is that you don't like about yourself.

(b) **INTENSITY**: When responding interchangably the intensity of the response will generally match the intensity of the helpee's expressions, both in the label of the feeling and the manner of communicating. If the

helpee's expressions are noticeably lacking in affect, the helper models more intensity–both verbally and non-verbally–to gradually increase the intensity of the helpee's communication. (Note: use modifiers which increase intensity such as "really" or "very" and avoid decreasing intensity by avoiding limiting modifiers such as "kind of" or "pretty".)

Increasing volume and rate of speech will also increase the intensity of the helper's response.

(c) **CONCRETENESS AND SPECIFICNESS**: In responding to the helpee's self–exploration, the facilitative helper labels the immediate, concrete and specific feelings and relates these feelings first to the specific stimuli which the helpee perceives as eliciting the feeling and then to the general class of stimuli (types of behavior, people, or events) which elicits the feeling. Any observation may be perceived and/or transmitted at various levels of concreteness or abstraction. In general, more data is transmitted with abstractions and more commonality of meaning exists with concreteness. In interpersonal communication, commonality of meaning (understanding) takes precedence over the amount of data transmitted. Therefore, in helping, the helper will stay at a level of concreteness and specificity which is meaningful and helpful to the helpee.

(d) **VARIETY**: The helper will generally attempt to respond with a different affective label than that used by the helpee even if the helpee is able to label the affective experience specifically and accurately. This serves to give variety and fluency to the verbal interaction and avoid a "canned" or "parroting" sound (e.g., "I am really disgusted"/ "You are really disgusted"). The situation presents a problem for many helpers, however, as their repertoire of feeling responses is very limited. When the helper is able to respond with a wide variety of affective labels the helpee will integrate more of these constructs into his repertoire of affective responses.

(e) **IMMEDIACY**: The helper's responses should serve to keep the helpee's self-exploration in the here-and-now. Integration of thoughts, feelings, and action, if it is to occur at all, must occur in the present. Two of the ways people avoid being in touch with their feelings are to live in the past or to live in the future. Another way people avoid owning their feelings is to project them onto impersonal pronouns, (e.g., "You can't ever tell what my wife is going to do!" rather than "I can't ever tell what my wife is going to do!"). So the helper's responses will emphasize present tense, first person expressions as much as possible.

Summary

SO FAR WE HAVE SAID:

Research and experience have led us to believe that "Person-Centered Responding" is the preferred mode of counseling practice until the client and counselor have agreed upon a specific behavior change stated in operational terms.

Therefore, our objective is to help you become more genuine, respectful towards yourself and others, and able to understand and accept what another person is thinking and feeling.....

SO THAT YOU WILL:

Be able to better identify and label what another person is feeling and thinking and to communicate this verbally in a way which reinforces the person's self-exploration so that the person gets more and more into the experience until it is completed (resolved).

To the Helper

The process of helping is a very personal endeavor, both from the standpoint of the helper and helpee. As you develop new concepts and skills about human experiencing and helping, it is essential to integrate these concepts and skills into your self-system. This results in your learning more about yourself as you learn more about other people and the world.

The next section specifically focuses on self-understanding and provides a structured activity to assist you in exploring your construct system. This is followed by a brief presentation of a general model of behavior and behavior change. The remainder of the Primer is devoted to further developing your understanding of the concepts and operations in this IPS Model for Helping.

By this time you have already invested considerable energy into this training program. Our fantasy is that you have been engaged by it so that we can continue our dialogue.

You may wish to know at this time, exactly what you would be expected to do should you decide to continue . .

Work through 36 additional pages of materials which includes:

1. Twenty-six pages of reading.

2. A programmed exercise which assists you to analyze one aspect of your interpersonal relations (One hour).

3. Work two skill building exercises (6 pages in all).

4. Recall and understand various sets of information and relate these subsets to each other and to the total training program.

5. Consider your personal response to the concepts and operations presented in this IPS Primer.

HELPER

Exploring Your Personal Construct System

The next exercise is designed to help you better understand how you construe your interpersonal experiencing, in the hope that it will help you to be more sensitive to the major constructs your clients use.

Working this exercise will enable you to learn some interesting and important information about yourself. It will also help you develop important skills for use in the understanding phase of helping others.

You will acquire some additional information about your personal construct system from the training group. Be sure to bring the information you develop from this exercise with you so you can compare the two. No one but you will see this information.

As you work this exercise, do not look ahead. Work through the materials as they are presented.

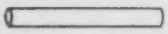
The Nature of Constructs

When you assign a characteristic to a person, doing so implies that you would be able to conceive of at least one person who has more of that characteristic and at least one person who has less. In other words, the characteristic represents a dimension of individual differences along which people vary.

We all have our unique and personal constructs we use to describe others. The particular dimension you prefer influences you to look for certain information and ignore or distort other information.

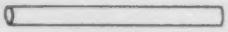
Most people use similar constructs (dimensions) to describe physical phenomenon, but not so with interpersonal phenomenon. To illustrate the nature of a common physical construct, consider the concept of "length".

It is necessary to have three reference points in order to understand a concept. If you had no knowledge of the concept of length and wanted to learn what the concept "short" means, it would not be sufficient to show you a short stick thus:

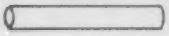
A. 

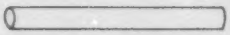
Even adding another stick and telling you that A is shorter than B does not complete your understanding.

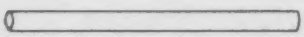
A.

B. 

However, if stick C is added and you are told that

A. 

B. 

C. 

A is shorter than B; that B is shorter than C and longer than A; and that sticks A and B are short relative to C; then it makes sense to refer to stick A as a short stick. You could say that A is short like B whereas C is long.

Who Are Some of Your Significant Others

Write the names of the persons who occupy the following roles in relation to you.

1. Mother _____
2. Father _____
3. Spouse (or favorite opposite sexed friend) _____
4. Favorite brother or male cousin _____
5. Least favorite brother or male cousin. _____
6. Favorite sister or female cousin _____
7. Least favorite sister or female cousin _____
8. Favorite teacher _____
9. Least favorite teacher _____
10. Favorite minister or person who has influenced your philosophy _____
11. Favorite same-sexed friend _____
12. A person of the same sex whom you dislike _____
13. Favorite actor _____
14. Favorite actress _____
15. Friend of the opposite sex, relationship not primarily romantic _____

Making Comparisions

Taking different combinations of the persons you listed on the previous page, three at a time, you are to think of how two of them are alike and different from the third.

A. Person number 1 is_____like person number 2 whereas person number 3 is more_____.

B. 3 is _____ like 1 whereas 2 is more _____.

C. 8 is _____ like 10 whereas 2 is more _____.

D. 9 is _____ like 12 whereas 3 is more _____.

E. 4 is _____ like 13 whereas 9 is more _____.

F. 6 is _____ like 14 whereas 7 is more _____.

G. 7 is _____ like 1 whereas 6 is more _____.

H. 11 _____ like 4 whereas 5 is more _____.

I. 3 is _____ like 14 whereas 1 is more _____.

J. 3 is _____ like 13 whereas 2 is more _____.

K. 15 is _____ like 8 whereas 3 is more _____.

L. 14 is _____ like 1 whereas 10 is more _____.

M. 5 is _____ like 7 whereas 12 is more _____.

N. 9 is _____ like 10 whereas 13 is more _____.

O. 2 is _____ like 8 whereas 4 is more _____.

P. 11 is _____ like 15 whereas 1 is more _____.

HELPER

Helper Self-Exploration

For each of the statements A through P (on page 51), you have used a pair of opposites called bi-polar dimensions. The crucial point of this exercise is, "Along what dimensions do you construe your interpersonal experience?" Here is an activity which will facilitate your self-exploration.

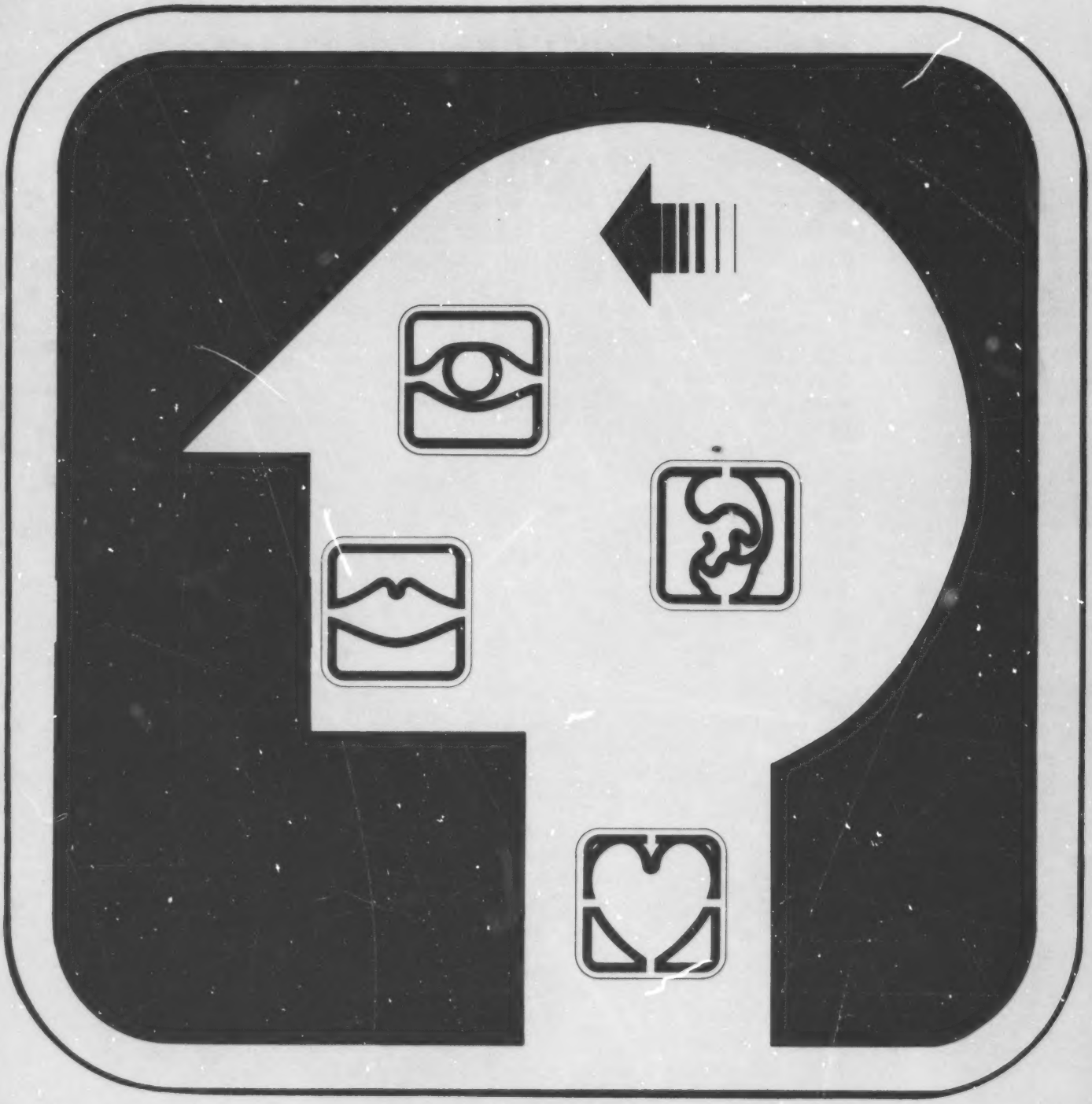
1. Group the pairs together which are similar.

2. Select one pair which best represents each group.

3. Rank the groups from most frequently to least frequently used.

4. The more frequently used dimensions will indicate to you what you have a tendency to look for in people. Can you see how straining your experiences through this particular net could influence your behavior?

5. In what kinds of situations does your pattern especially influence your behavior? (whom, where, and what conditions) Fill in the following blanks in regard to your pattern:
   Whenever I'm in a situation where _____,
   I usually experience feelings of _____.
   I tell myself _____.
   And what I do is _____.



Part II

Facilitating Behavior Change

The purpose of the preceding section was to help shift from an evaluative mode of responding to a descriptive mode of responding. In order to describe a process as complex as human behavior, it is necessary to employ some cognitive schema (model, metaphor, theory, etc.) around which to organize perceptions, observations, and descriptions. In other words, a prerequisite for facilitating behavior changes is to have a plan.

Information Processing Model Of Human Behavior

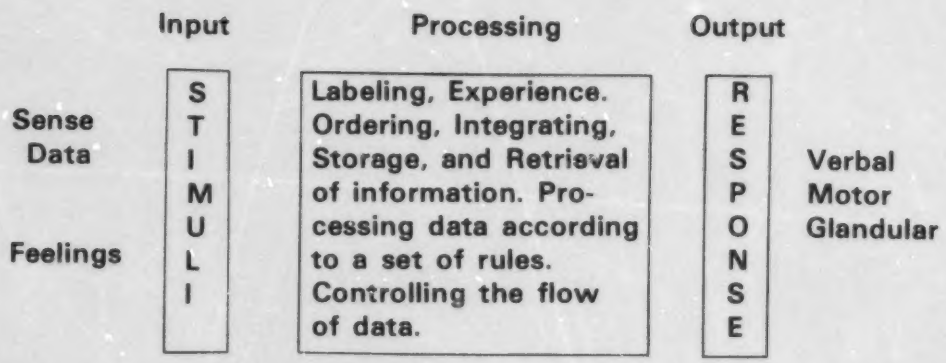
The information processing model will help you focus your attention on relevant aspects of the helpee's behavior. A person's ability to make continuing adaptive responses in a given environment depends upon his ability to process the relevant information available. Focusing upon how the helpee inputs, processes and outputs information and the feedback the helpee receives as a function of processing information, provides you an organized frame of reference for describing the helpee's behavior.

Looking at the person as an information processor provides one alternative to looking at the person as a good or bad student, worker, provider, etc. It also encourages helpers to view helpees as growing processes as opposed to fixed entities. Viewing persons as processes will help you stay out of the evaluation trap.

Facilitating behavior change means changing a process since behavior is a process. The information system which best integrates all the scientific disciplies is General Information Theory. Since the sciences are a projection and extension of man, information processing theory seems well suited for describing human behavior change. The following diagram is an application of general information theory to human behavior.

Information Processing Model of Human Behavior

FIGURE 3



People input external information about their environment through their senses. Internal information about the state of their organisms is input through feelings.

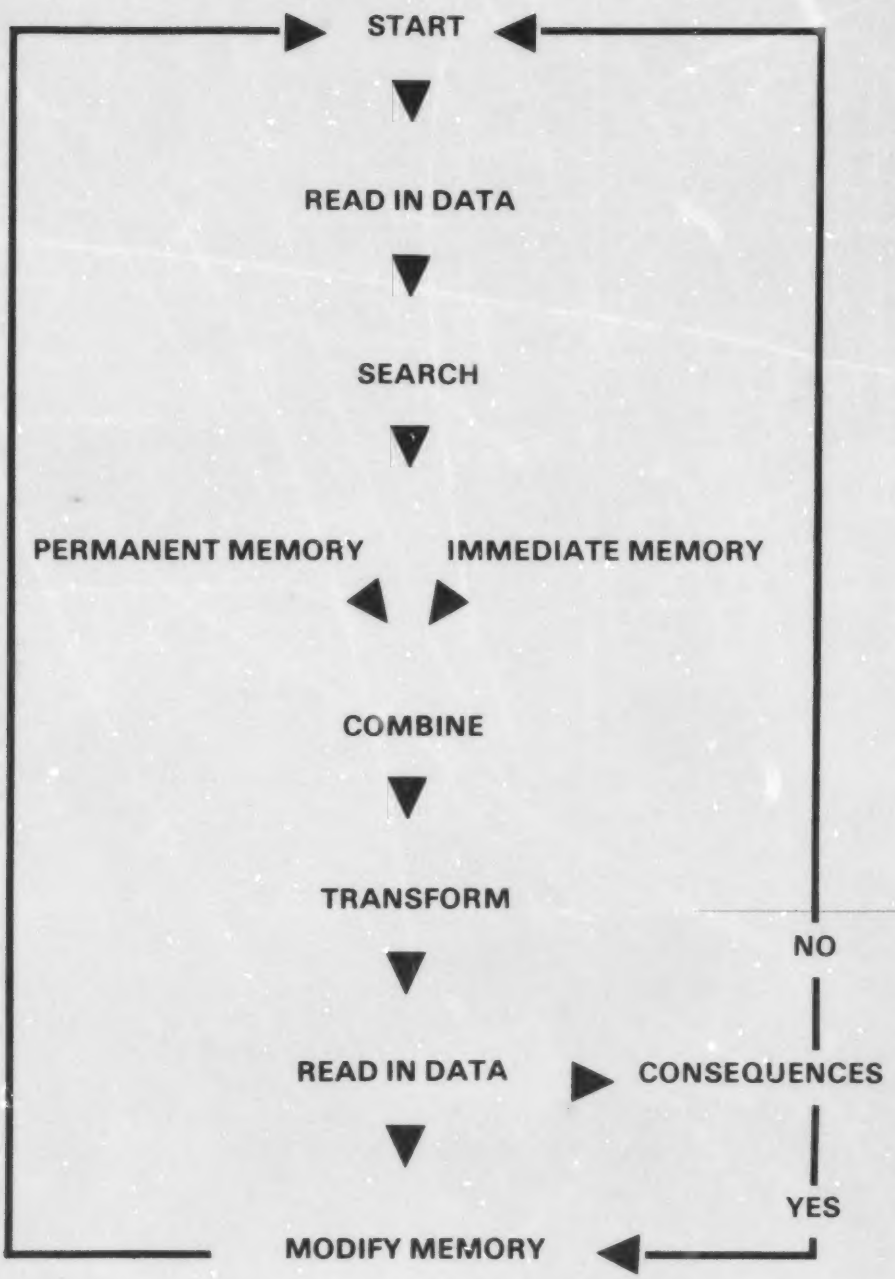
At any given time and place output (behavior) is limited by: (a) the amount, relevance, and accuracy of informational inputs, (b) the capacity for and precision in processing information, and (c) the person's ability to respond to his/her environment.

Although Input, Processing, and Output are distinct systems, they are parts of a larger whole (person's experiencing system). There is no human response which does not to some degree involve the total organism. Any change in one system affects the other two. For example, if a person loses his mobility, his access to information is reduced. This reduction affects the processing of information and output of information. This reduction in function will continue until the person or a helper devises new sources of stimulation to off-set the loss.

In that both people and computers are information processors, a flow chart of a computer program (Figure 4) serves as an analogy or model of human behavior (Figure 5). Compare the two information processing systems.

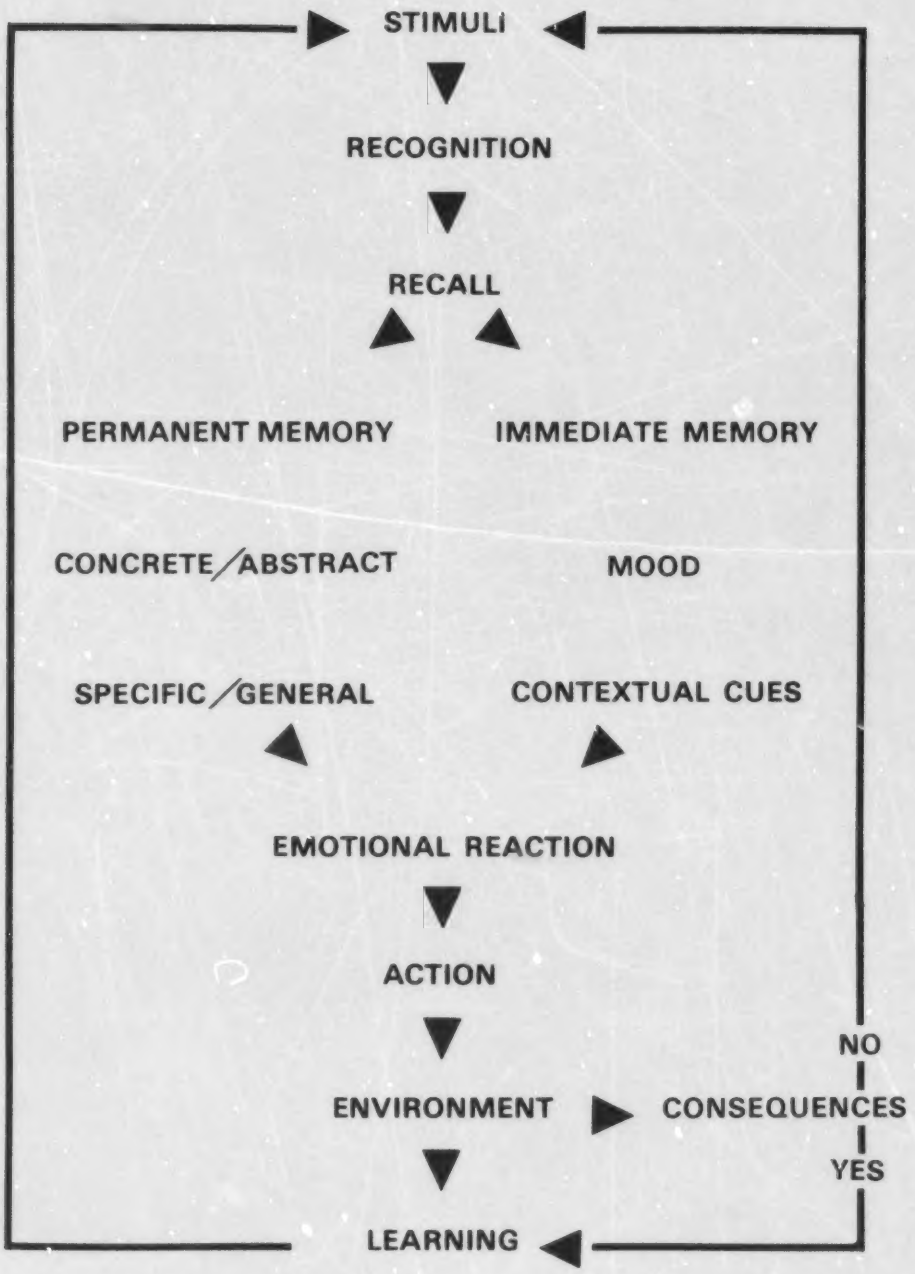
Flow Diagram of a Computer Program

FIGURE 4



Flow Diagram of Information Processing Model of Behavior

FIGURE 5



Comparisons

1. A computer's response is based on how it has been programmed.

2. A person's response (behavior) is also based on how he/she is programmed – what feeling, thinking, and movement has been learned.

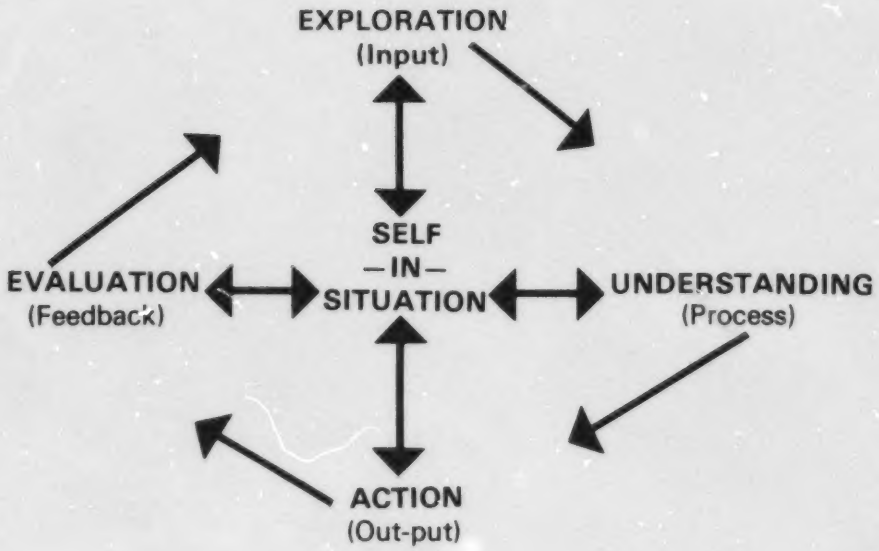
3. To change a computer's response you must *initiate* and *execute* a request for a change in programming.

4. To change a person's behavior you must facilitate a change in his/her thinking, feeling, and movement.

5. Computers may be programmed to make more or less use of feedback to modify its existing program.

6. Persons are taught to be more or less open to experience including feedback from their own actions.

How to Facilitate Adaptive Behavior Change

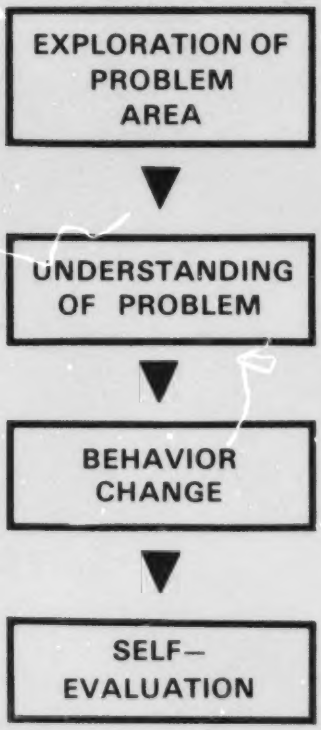


People and computers input, process, and output information. There is an important difference, however. Computers process information much faster than it can be read in, or written out of the system. Persons, on the other hand, input information much faster than they can process it.

It has been hypothesized that the average person uses less than 10% of their capacity for processing information. For this reason, training a person to label, order, and integrate his feelings with his thinking and action can greatly increase the person's ability to live effectively. When the person is more in touch with everything that is occurring in his world, his behavior is much more likely to be adaptive.

Viewing the helpee as an information processor is also consistent with what we know about how behavior change takes place. By being attentive and responsive to the helpee we facilitate his self-exploration through increasing relevant inputs; by providing the helpee with concrete and specific feedback about how he processes information we help to improve his understanding and goal setting; and through modeling, shaping, and differential reinforcement we assist the helpee in reducing some outputs and increasing others—thus changing his observable behavior. The model of adaptive functioning—inputing, processing, and outputting information, in such a way as to maximize feedback—is logically and empirically related to the helping process outlined on the next page:

The Process of Helping



Imagine a client who continually fails in training because he doesn't seem to try. It would be great if you could just tell this client to shape-up, but this seldom does any long term good. The client is more likely to change his behavior in an adaptive way if facilitated to explore and get more in touch with his own experiencing. Through self-exploration the client will come to:

(a) Better understand his own feeling and thinking about himself.

(b) Better understand his attitudes and feelings about others.

(c) Understand the reasons for his continued failure.

(d) Act constructively on his understanding.

(e) Check the results of his actions.

Review of Information Processing

Please fill in the blanks below and then check your answers at the bottom of the page.

1. It is necessary to employ some cognitive scheme such as a theory or model in order to _____ a process as complex as human behavior.

2. A person's ability to make continuing adaptive responses depends on his ability to _____, _____, and act upon the relevant information available.
3. The information processing model of behavior influences helpers to view people as _____ as opposed to fixed entities.

4. People input external information about their environment through their _____ and internal information about the state of their organism through _____.

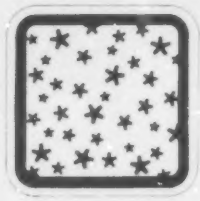
5. The informational processes of inputting, processing, outputting, and feedback together make up the person's _____ system which may be thought of as self-in-situation.

6. If you wish to facilitate a change in a person's behavior, then you facilitate a change in his _____ and/or _____.

7. In the process of helping, exploration and understanding come before _____ which is followed by evaluation.

ANSWERS:

1. **describe**
2. **input, process**
3. **processes**
4. **senses, feelings**
5. **experiencing**
6. **thinking, feeling**
7. **action**



The Nature of Behavior Change

The process of changing or growing involves exploring to the point of understanding at which time action can be taken. The process is sequential, i.e., Exploration must precede understanding which must precede Action if growth is to occur. The process of helping is to facilitate the helpee's exploration, understanding and action.

In this section the process of helping will be explained by dealing with the exploration, understanding and action phases individually.

Exploration:

Exploration, the first stage of helping, involves helping the person increase the relevant information inputs available to him. Our experience with helping in this area indicates a common core of needs which are characteristic of most helpees:

1. To attend more effectively to relevant aspects of their environment.

2. To maintain a higher level of awareness of their immediate feelings in all kinds of situations.

3. A method of examining and becoming aware of their basic assumptions about themselves and the world.

4. A method of clarifying their values.
5. A consistent and comprehensive construct system (a personal and integrated vocabulary) for labeling, ordering, storing, retrieving, and integrating information from items one, two, three and four above.

6. To extinguish anxiety or avoidance responses which have been conditioned to certain classes of information. These avoidance patterns differ from person to person, but some very common ones are as follows:
    A. Sexuality
    B. Intimacy
    C. Knowledge of how the person is perceived by others.
    D. Awareness of strong feelings such as joy, fear, anger or depression.
    E. Knowleuge of specific, but undeveloped potentials.
    F. Awareness of pain.

So, the main objective of the Exploration stage is to increase the helpee's ability and tendency to explore himself in relationship to his environment (self-in-situation).

Active attending and empathic listening are the most effective means for facilitating this self-exploration.

Understanding—

The second stage of behavior change is understanding. Understanding is accomplished when the person is processing all the potentially relevant information available and when all informational inputs are meaningfully related to all other informational inputs. From the perspective of a single individual, perfect understanding would of course be impossible, but rather, understanding exists in degree. Some operational indexes for determining when understanding is reached are as follows:

1. When the helpee consistantly and accurately labels his own feelings.
2. When the helpee is able to relate his feelings to the particular experiences which cause them.
3. When the helpee reveals to a facilitative helper in an open and spontaneous manner, both positive and negative aspects of himself.
4. When the helpee is able to describe at least one thematic area of concern in very concrete terms.
5. When the helpee can describe in measurable terms a desired behavior change he wishes to make.

By empathetically sharing the experiencing of the helpee in a concrete and specific context, the helper serves as an extension of the helpee's information processing system.

All of the helping responses used in the exploration phase are also useful in the understanding phase. In the exploration phase the role of the helper is primarily that of modeling open, genuine and empathic behavior and being responsive to the helpee. Being responsive means staying within the helpee's frame of reference – responding in such a way as to positively reinforce the helpee's continued self-exploration without introducing extraneous material into the interaction. During the understanding phase, the helper takes on more initiative roles while continuing to maintain a high degree of responsiveness to the helpee. Some examples of helper responses which begin to increase during the understanding phase are as follows:

A. You share with the helpee more of your understanding of him which you began to develop during the exploration phase. You develop this information by:

   (1) Listening for recurring feelings and recurring areas of concern.

   (2) Watching for consistent body language cues which form a pattern.

   (3) Identifying the basic assumptions held by the helpee which are implied by the persons' behavior.

   (4) Noticing what the person avoids.

(5) Identifying and making explicit the major constructs through which the person perceives and structures his experience (personal construct system).

You share this information with the helpee through additive empathic responses and confrontation.

B. You reveal more intimate aspects of yourself to the helpee. This serves the purpose of modeling the kind of self-disclosing behavior the helpee needs to engage in and also it is a necessary element for developing a significant relationship. The relationship between you and the helpee is probably the most significant medium of learning you can provide the helpee.

C. You begin to make explicit what is going on between you and the helpee in terms of how you feel about each other and how you relate to each other. This teaches the helpee a way to understand how he relates to other people. This process is called "Immediacy Of Relationship."

ACTION:

The division of the helping process into any number of phases is arbitrary and solely for the purpose of analysis. The process goes forward in continuous cycles of exploration, understanding, and action. Any given period of contact may involve one or more cycles of exploration, understanding and action. The total helping process which may extend over several months will also proceed through these three phases.

Whereas the ability to respond to the helpee's self-exploration with accurate empathy is the most important helper skill during the exploration stage; and the ability to help the person see what assumptions (rules for processing information) he is being guided by is the most important during the understanding stage,the ability to help the person actuate and sustain a program for changing his behavior is the most important helping skill in the action phase. This ability includes the following skills and characteristics:

A. Skill to design a series of small logical steps for getting from where the person is now to where he wishes to go.

B. Skill in persuading or conditioning the helpee to take action and committment to follow through, with any ethical means available, to see that he continues to do so.

C. Skill in helping the person identify any existing or potential reinforcers in his environment which can be made contingent upon carrying out the program.

Summary of Facilitating Behavior Change

View persons as processes as opposed to fixed, static entities.

To understand people, pay attention to what information they input, how they process this information, what information they output, and how they output this information.

Facilitative helpers have identifiable characteristics and skills.

Some aspects of being facilitative are:

To engage the helpee in self-exploration.

To attend empathetically to the helpee so as to increase the rate and intensity of self-exploration.

To respond empathetically and genuinely to the helpee.

To personalize the helpee's exploration of self-in-situation.

To initiate action which incorporates helper's and helpee's understanding.

To train the helpee to use effective means of self-evaluation and program development.

The chart on the next page (Figure 6) summarizes the major helpee processes which facilitative helping strengthens.

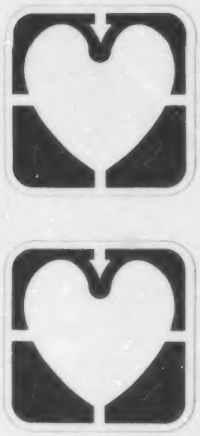
An Experiential Model for Facilitating Personal-Growth Behavior

FIGURE 6

HELPER	HELPEE		
	EXPLORATION	UNDERSTANDING	ACTION
Attending	Sensing experience	Organizing experience	Opening to experience
Responding	Labeling experience	Interpreting experience: cause & effect, part-whole relationships, hierarchical relationships, etc.	Initiating or generating experience
Personalizing	Expressing feelings about experience	Relating feelings, meanings, and actions	Personally owning experience and behavior
Initiating Action	Clarifying values and beliefs	Setting goals & developing goal-attainment programs	Accomplishing one's own goals (integrating experience)

EXPERIENCE: One's awareness of the internal and external stimuli impinging upon one; one's conceptualization of, feelings about, and intentions toward these stimuli; and the actions taken toward and in response to these stimuli. The concept of *experience* subsumes such positive concepts as learning, growing, development, etc., and such negative concepts as regression, disintegration, maladaptive behavior, etc. The concept, *integrating experince,* refers to the process of achieving congruence among sensing, interpreting, feeling, intending, and acting.

Empathic Confrontation



The total process of exploration, understanding, and action is contingent upon the helper making empathic responses to the helpee. Put more strongly, to be helpful you must respond to the helpee's communications with empathy.

As the helping process proceeds through exploration, understanding, and action the helper's responses reflect progressively deeper levels of empathy. The following demonstration of the different levels is divided into interchangeable level and additive level of empathy. The more additive the level of response the more confronting it is.

The Levels of Empathy

Interchangeable Level:

The most basic element of empathy is responding to the person's obvious feeling.

> **Helpee:** "Damn my wife. I get angry enough to kill her! She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do."
>
> **Helper:** "You are really furious!"

Responding to the person's feeling is crucial to building and maintaining the helping relationship. Responding to the person's feeling communicates understanding and caring on the part of the helper which is a prerequisite to a "safe situation" for helpee exploration.

While responding to the person's feeling alone is seldom therapeutic (i.e., it seldom leads to a deeper level of self-exploration or understanding) it does not detract from the person's self-exploration. Also, responding to the person's expressed feeling does not lead the helpee off on a tangent away from exploration.

Included in this aspect of empathy is responding to the affect which the helpee is obviously experiencing but does not label or mislabels. In this instance the helper reflects obvious affective experience with an accurate affective term.

Example:

In the instance above, the client could have angrily said "My wife makes me nervous by planning my activities." The helper response would be the same as the helpee is obviously communicating anger but is mislabeling it as "nervous".

Interchangeable:

Responding to the feeling and meaning, identifying the environmental stimuli.

In the previous section the helper reflects the person's emotional experience. In the second component of interchangeable responding the helper's first task is to define (label), as concretely and specifically as possible, the helpee's perception of the stimulus for the feeling. The helpee's perception of what the stimulus is may not be correct, but it is always the beginning point for self-exploration. If the helpee is "angry at the world" or gets "anxious around many people", this indicates that he is not much in touch with the actual concrete experience and needs help in identifying the stimulus for his feelings. The initial helper response (interchangeable level) refers to the specific stimulus for the particular feeling identified in the unit of behavior reported by the helpee.

> **Helpee**: "Damn my wife. I get angry enough to kill her! She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do!"
>
> **Helper**: "You feel furious enough to kill your wife when she plans stuff for you to do because you want to be free to decide for yourself."

The helpee is directing his anger at the person of his wife so that in order to be "with" the helpee it is important to tie into this perception before extending the response to the behavior of the wife (plans your activities) which is more specific.

It is important to keep in mind that the stimulus will most often be a behavior rather than a person. In the above case, "planning my activities", was the stimulus rather than the wife.

A second principle which is important to keep in mind is that the behavior will most often be one that can be generalized from one situation to another and from one person to another. As soon as the helper observes a sufficient number of specific instances of behavior which elicit a particular feeling, he generalizes to the type of behavior. Such types of behavior (stimuli) are not specific to one person or one situation.

In the example given, if the helpee indicated anger at other ways his wife restricted his freedom or anger at other people for restricting his freedom, the helper would generalize to one level higher abstraction when labeling the stimulus.

Helpee: "Damn my wife. I get angry enough to kill her. She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do!"

Helper: "You get furious enough to kill when you are controlled."

In the illustration above, identifying the "control" as the stimulus allows both the helper and the helpee to examine and perhaps eventually understand the helpee's behavior in many relationships. To have identified the stimulus as "control of your spare time" would have been limiting in terms of understanding the range of the client's behavior.

Helping is most effective when it facilitates the expression of the person's attitudes and feelings toward self. Accurate and specific identification of environmental stimuli relating to the specific feeling being expressed leads directly to the helpee making more self-reference statements.

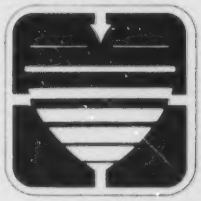
The basic format of interchangeable responses then is:

> You feel (expressed an obvious feeling) because (meaning and/or environmental stimuli).

This format can be varied, but the basic pattern of providing an affective label for expressed feeling and identifying the meaning must be included.

The importance of responding interchangeably must be emphasized. Though interchangeable responses alone are seldom sufficient, they must precede and accompany other responses which do lead to deeper levels of self-exploration and self-understanding.

The Levels of Empathy, cont



Additive Empathy:

In the previous section we discussed interchangeable responses. In summary, you learned that while interchangeable responses (responding to obvious or expressed feeling and the meaning or environmental stimuli for the feeling) is crucial to building and maintaining a helping relationship, interchangeable responses alone seldom facilitate deeper levels of self-exploration and understanding. The characteristic of interchangeable responses is that they neither add to nor detract from what the helpee is communicating.

At various points in the helping process, the helper has the opportunity to facilitate the helpee to a deeper level of self-exploration or understanding. This is accomplished by employing "additive empathy", that is the helper's response significantly adds to the helpee's statement.

The more the additive response adds to the helpee's experiencing and understanding, the more confronting and threatening it is likely to be perceived by the helpee. Therefore, your most helpful responses (most additive) will fequently be experienced as noxious by the helpee.

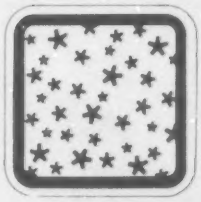
Experience indicates that within a reasonably good helping relationship, three positive reinforcements are required to offset one noxious one. Therefore, at least three-fourths of your helping responses will communicate only understanding and acceptance. Understanding and acceptance are communicated through interchangeable responses.

Using = for interchangeable responses and + for additive responses, a helper employing additive empathy would make a series of empathic responses something like: =, =, =, =, +, =, =, =, =, +, =, =, +, etc.

A helper response is additive only if it results in the helpee exploring himself at a deeper and more meaningful level. Unless the person understands and at least tentatively accepts the helper's response, it is not helpful. In fact, if the person is not "ready" to accept an additive response (i.e., he cannot integrate the information about himself) the response is likely to be harmful, eliciting defensiveness in the form of hostility or passive resistance.

The function of additive responses is to help the person *realize* what he already knows. Because an additive response labels what the helpee is already expressing at that moment, it feels right to him, is understood and integrated.

Identify the Deficit in the Helpee's Behavior Pattern

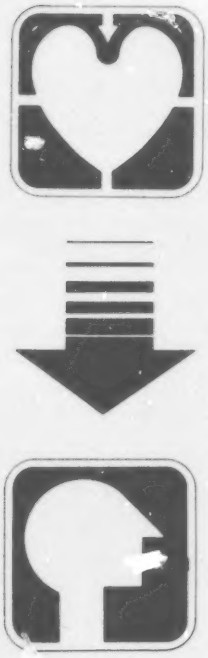


In most cases helpees are themselves responsible for – actually the creators of – their difficulties because of certain behavior patterns. When the helper gains an understanding of the person's behavior patterns, either through the person's description of activities outside the helping relationship or through the interpersonal encounter with the helpee, the helper may identify the behavior patterns in concise, descriptive terms. Ultimately, it is the goal of helping to replace maladaptive behavior patterns with adaptive behavior patterns; identification of the problem behavior patterns is therefore a necessary prerequisite for change. Any problem behavior or maladaptive behavior generally implies a need to develop concepts and skills to support opposite or alternate behaviors.

Example:

> **Helpee:** "Damn my wife! I get angry enough to kill her! She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do!"
>
> **Helper:** "It makes you furious as hell when you are controlled, and yet it is you who are allowing yourself to be controlled."

Here the helper brought out the helpee's maladaptive behavior pattern: that the client allowed himself to be controlled. If the client were ready for communication of empathy at this level, this counselor statement would serve to make him responsible for some of his problems and set the stage for him to be able to discover what he needs to be able to know, feel, and do in order not to have this problem.



Feelings Toward Self as a Result of Interaction with the Environment

In all instances where people have a significant interaction with their environment, there is some self-evaluation as a result of the interaction. Regardless of the type of emotional experience (e.g., anger, love, fear, elation) felt toward the environmental stimulus, people will evaluate themselves in reference to the interaction and derive some amount of satisfaction or dissatisfaction from their behavior. Often these feelings toward the self will be conflictive; the experience will cause both positive and negative feelings.

Example:

> **Helpee:** "Damn my wife! I get angry enough to kill her! She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do."
>
> **Helper:** "It makes you furious as hell when you are controlled, and you get mighty angry at yourself for allowing other people to control you."

In the above response, the helper added ("and You get mighty angry at yourself. . ."). Were this comment appropriate in terms of the clients' readiness, the client might be expected to continue self-exploration in terms of feelings and attitudes toward self, a more productive type of therapeutic content.

Expectations of Self

Human beings systematically reward or punish themselves according to how well they believe their performance satisfies the expectations they hold for themselves. We are made up of thousands of demands on self, the meeting of which is requisite to feeling generally good about ourselves. These demands may be synonymous with super-ego, ideal self, or parent. The demands, of course, are double-edged: If they are met, the affective experience is positive; if not, the experience is negative. Self-expectations may need modification or behaviors may need to be developed that satisfy the demands.

Example:

> **Helpee**: "Damn my wife! I get angry enough to kill her! She continually plans my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do."
>
> **Helper**: "It makes you furious as hell when you are controlled, and you get mighty angry at yourself for allowing other people to control you. It's important for you to see yourself as being your own man, and you're really disappointed in yourself when you don't live up to this image."

With this addition (It's important. . .) the helper brought out that the helpee needs to control himself in order to accept himself and feel comfortable.

BELIEFS

Basic Beliefs About Self

Many people we encounter in counseling situations have basic beliefs about themselves that result in maladaptive behavior. Information about these beliefs is often relevant and pertinent to the person's self-understanding and requisite to adaptive behavior changes.

Example:

Helpee. "Damn my wife, I get angry enough to kill her! She is continually planning my activities. She could have some respect for what I like to do."

Helper: "It makes you angry as hell when people control you, and you get mighty angry at yourself for allowing other people to do so. It's damn important for you to control your own life and affairs, and yet the idea of asserting yourself is really scary. It's almost as though you are saying to yourself that you can't cut it, can't stand up for yourself and make your own way - and that's a really depressing thought."

Here the helper has brought out that at some level the helpee is saying to himself something on the order of "I am a milksop". Failing to deal with this type of belief about oneself in terms of developing more adaptive types of behavior is tantamount to remodeling a house on a crumbling foundation.

Summary of Empathic Responding

INTERCHANGEABLE

Identify the Problem

1. Respond to the helpee's feeling. (You feel furious)
2. Relate the feeling to the specific stimulus. (You feel furious because your wife plans your activities)
3. Relate the feeling to the class of stimulus. (You feel furious when you are controlled)

Personalize the Problem

1. Relate the feeling and meaning (experience) to the deficit in the helpee's behavior pattern. (You feel furious because you allow yourself to be controlled)
2. Respond to the helpee's feeling towards self regarding the perceived deficit. (You feel furious at yourself for allowing others to control you)

ADDITIVE

Personalize the Goal

1. Transform the problem statement into an operational goal statement and personalize the feeling. (You want to become more self-directive and you're afraid you won't be able to)
2. Relate the experience to the helpee's perception of himself. (You're beginning to see that a lot of the angry noises you make are to drown out the depressive feelings you get when you imagine you're not good enough or strong enough to be a whole person or free person)

EXERCISE

Practice Exercise

In the following helpee statements, the primary feeling word and/or the stimulus for that feeling has been omitted from the helper's response. Correct responses are provided in the left margin. Cover these responses, write in your response to the helpee and then check your answer.

Study the list of feeling words on the following page. This will help you identify the correct affective label. Notice that discrimination on two dimensions is required: (a) which of four categories – elation, depression, anger, or fear is the feeling in, and (b) how intense is the feeling?

Affective Vocabulary

	Elation	Depression	Anger	Fear
PERCEPTIBLE	relieved	flat	bugged	shy
	glad	bored	annoyed	startled
	pleased	discontented	ruffled	uneasy
	amused	resigned	nettled	tense
	playful	apathetic	harrassed	anxious
	cheerful	numb	irritated	nervous
	optimistic	blah	put-upon	worried
	giddy	melancholy	abused	concerned
	gay	blue	resentful	timid
	calm	gloomy	spiteful	apprehensive
	composed	rotten	mean	up-tight
	comfortable	ignored	irked	
	cool	distressed	peeved	
	secure	low		
	relaxed	sad		
	confident	unhappy		
	complacent	drained		
	peaceful			
MODERATE	delighted	disappointed	disgusted	alarmed
	jovial	shot-down	ticked-off	jittery
	merry	slighted	mad	scared
	bubbly	bewildered	angry	afraid
	tickled	disheartened	smoldering	frightened
	glowing	hurt	riled	fearful
	festive	abused	peeved-off	threatened
	frisky	lost	hot	trembly
	spry	trapped	contemptuous	shaken
	happy	regretful	animosity	
	proud	ashamed	anmity	
	joyous	burdened		
	excited	down		
	high	hopeless		
	turned-on	lifeless		
	great	dead		
		deflated		
		empty		
		dispair		
		unwanted		
		lonely		
INTENSE	alive	miserable	fed-up	cowed
	blissful	downcast	fuming	dread
	sparkling	crushed	burned-up	panicky
	vivacious	helpless	incensed	terrified
	radiant	humiliated	infuriated	terror sticken
	wonderful	depressed	destructive	horrified
	enthralled	withdrawn	hatred	petrified
	exhilarated	worthless	explosive	
	exuberant	abandoned	violent	
	elated	dejected	enraged	
	ecstatic	heartbroken	irate	
		despondent		
		tortured		
		anguished		

Practice for Empathic Responding

1. Mother hauled me downtown– 16 years old–and she acts like I'm five. "Put this dress on; buy this one. Oh! I like big bows. All she needs is an "A" cup bra — she's just a little girl." You feel _____ because your mother embarrasses you.

Resentful

2. Frank's a fink. He took my girl. Hell, I even introduced them. You know he even had the gall to borrow my car.
   You feel humiliated because _____.

You're being used

3. Yeah, I wish I never had to see them but they're both in all my classes. I don't know how I'm going to face it.
   You feel so very _____ because there seems to be no way to get out of this humiliating situation.

Trapped

4. I feel like an ungrateful rat. He's done so much for me. I've done nothing for him. I can't even seem to tell him how much I appreciate it.
   You feel _____ because you haven't shown him much gratitude and you're afraid you might lose the chance to keep this relationship going before you really decide whether or not you want to.

Ashamed

5. Well, I haven't really asked him to do anything but yet he does and I do feel that I ought to show him more appreciation. You appreciate his desire to be helpful and at the same time you deeply _____ the way he puts you in a position where you feel obligated.

Resent

6. I guess I'm really mad at myself because I let him do things for me that I could do for myself. (voice trails off into a monotone and looses volume).
   It is very _____ to come face to face with something in yourself which you don't accept. At this point you seem uncertain about how dependent upon another person you can be and still be O.K.

Depressing

7. I've been here for two months and nobody's been here to see me. I don't see why they can't drive up to see me.
   It _____ you very much to feel left out — as though your parents don't really.

Hurts Care

8. There's some real freaks here. That fat girl just lies on the floor rolling and foaming at the mouth. I can't stand that. When she starts in I head for my room.
   _____ make you feel frightened — to the point where you have to get away.

People who are different

9. When I left there yesterday, I was so upset I was ready to look for another job. He was telling me to back off from a project I really put my heart into.
   You still feel _____ because _____.

Angry
Your boss is interfering with something that's important to you.

10. They can't make me do it. The requirements are to rigid and unreasonable. I don't care if I make it or not.
    You resent the requirements and also I imagine you're frightened because_____.

You really do care and your're afraid you won't make it the way the system works now.

Congratulations!

You feel proud because you have increased your knowledge and effectiveness by learning the skills and concepts in this booklet.

We hope you will enjoy the Interpersonal Skills Training. You already have a cognitive information base for learning:

A. What to look and listen for -

B. What to respond to -

C. How to help people open up -

D. How to avoid turning people off -

E. How to avoid fights and arguments -

F. How to get more in touch with your experiencing -

G. How to help clients become noticeably more self-directing, self-supporting and emotionally mature people.

The IPS training will give you an opportunity to practice and become proficient in the skills. Your instructor will also help clear up any areas you had difficulty following here.

Thanks for going through the booklet with us.

Notes

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